

Today I received disturbing information that eight female juveniles housed at Columbia Training School had been leg shackled as a means of confinement as a prevention measure because they threatened to escape. I immediately ordered that a thorough investigation be conducted in order to ascertain the facts of this incident, and that investigation is under way. If demonstrated to be factual, such abhorrent mistreatment of juvenile offenders housed at the training school is counter to my directions, department policy and extensive staff training over the past several months. The administrators in charge during the time of the alleged incident have been suspended with pay pending completion of the investigation.

This department does not and will not tolerate mistreatment of any child in our care. We are prepared to do whatever it takes to ensure their safety and well-being. While no serious injuries are asserted in this case, the affected juveniles are receiving medical attention.

Further, if these allegations are true, we must consider all possible solutions that will prevent this type of mistreatment in the future, including potentially closing training school facilities.